# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6068
ANSWERED ON:11.04.2017
Activities in Western Ghats Zone
Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Government is aware that Western Ghats Zone is being affected by mining, quarrying, big constructions, thermal power plants and certain other types of industries;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which the Western Ghats Zone is polluted;
(c) whether the Government has any proposal to declare Western Ghats as new 'no-go' zone;
(d) if so, the details thereof; and
(e) the time by which the above proposal is likely to be implemented?

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIORNMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) to (e) Western Ghats with its rich biological diversity is a global biodiversity hotspot. To protect and conserve the unique biodiversity of Western Ghats and to promote sustainable and inclusive development of the region the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had set up the High Level Working Group (HLWG) under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kasturirangan for recommending measures for the conservation and environmental integrity of the Western Ghats.

HLWG, in its report recommended that the activities which have maximum interventionist and destructive impacts on natural ecosystems should not be permitted in Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Areas, namely- (i) Mining, quarrying and sand mining (ii) Thermal Power Plants (iii) Building and construction projects of 20,000 sq. m. area and above (iv) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 ha and above and/or with built up area of 1,50,000 sq. m. and above (v) Red category of industries.

MoEF&CC has in principle accepted the HLWG report and to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013 prohibiting and regulating certain activities as recommended by HLWG .

Further, this Ministry had published the draft Notification to declare Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) of the Western Ghats region on 10.03.2014 with a contiguous area of 56825 square kilometres spread over six states, namely Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The draft Notification has provision to prohibit certain projects and activities in eco-sensitive areas of Western Ghats that has maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on the Western Ghats eco-system. Later, addressing the concerns/ apprehensions expressed by various stakeholders, the Draft Notification was re-published on 04.09.2015.

Recently, superseding the earlier Draft Notification, this Ministry has re-published the Draft Notification on the ESA of the Western Ghats region on 27.02.2017 for seeking stakeholders comments. Also, the states of the Western Ghats have been intimated to provide their final views/recommendation along with necessary maps for finalisation of the Ecologically Sensitive Areas in the Western Ghats region.

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